

8534 A K Sells (N.)

LETTER

TO THE
Second Church and Congregation
in Scituate.

Written by their Rev. Pastor.

Shewing some Reasons why he doth not
invite the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield in-
to his Pulpit.

To which is added,

A *Postscript*, containing an Answer to the
Reasons given by a Number of Ministers
conven'd at Taunton, in the County of
Bristol, for their inviting of him into
their Pulpits, &c.

Rom. 10. 1. *Brethren, my Heart's Desire and Prayer to God
for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

Rom. 16. 17. *Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which
cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which
ye have heard, and avoid them.*

B O S T O N :

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over against the Old South Meeting House.

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A

LETTER

TO THE

Board of Directors and Company

of the

Western Union Telegraph Company

of New York



Respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. W. Smith

By the Board of Directors,
J. W. Smith, President



The REVEREND


Mr. *Eells's* LETTER

TO HIS

Church and Congregation.



Dearly Beloved in our Lord and Saviour
JESUS CHRIST,

 O U have been the People of my pastoral Care and Charge for the Space of forty Years and ten Months. You have been a loving and kind People to me ; and I have endeavoured, according to the Measure of Grace given me, to approve my self faithful to God, and to you ; and hitherto we have (through the Kindness of God,) lived in great Love, Peace, and Unity among our selves, when other Churches have been rent and broken with Divisions.

In

In my publick Ministry among you, from my first Settlement, I have endeavoured to guard you against Men of corrupt Principles, and to instruct you according to the Truth of the Gospel ; and thro' the Kindness of God, neither Anabaptism, nor Quakerism, which were then common, hath gained any Ground, and there are now but very few of either Denomination in the Town.

I have also not failed, as there hath been Occasion, to warn you against *Impostors* ; *i. e.* Men who take upon them to preach, without any Warrant from Christ, the supream Head and Saviour of the Church.

And in the three or four Years past, wherein there hath been both Good and Evil prevailing in the Country ; the Work of God, and the Work of the Devil, going on in a Way more remarkable than ever hath been known in these Churches since their first planting ; I have endeavoured to keep such out of my Pulpit, as appeared to me not Promoters of the Religion of these Churches, which I esteem to be the Religion of Christ.

And whereas the Rev. Mr. *George Whitefield*, a remarkable Itinerant Preacher, hath of late gained considerable Applause and Encouragement, not only in the Metropolis of this Province, but also in some Country Towns ; I think it proper this Way to let you know, why I have not invited him to preach in my Pulpit.

And the Reasons are these ;

- I. *Because to me it doth not appear, that he stands right in the Ministry of the Gospel of Christ.*

And

And if he doth not stand right in the Ministry, he hath no Right to preach and administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For the Apostle hath said, Rom. 10. 15. *How shall they preach except they be sent?* -----Tho' they may do it presumptuously, yet they can't do it warrantably; for no Man taketh this Honour to himself, but he that is called of God, Heb. 5. 4. i. e. no Man taketh it to himself lawfully, who is not called of God; and if he doth not take it lawfully, he hath no just Right to it.

Object. It may be some will object and say, *Mr. Whitefield hath been regularly introduced into the Ministry of the Gospel, having received Episcopal Ordination.*

Ans. Tho' I should grant this, yet it doth not give me sufficient Warrant now to open my pulpit to him.

For

1. By his Episcopal Ordination he received no Authority to Itinerate in the Manner he hath done for several Years past: But the Authority he received from the Bishop confined him to a certain Place, (till he should receive further Orders) and to a certain Mode in publick Worship. And he then put himself under the Oath of God to be subject to the Bishop, and to observe the Mode of Worship used in the Church of which he was ordained a Minister, *and no other.*

2. The Authority which he received from the Bishop who ordained him, he hath forfeited, and is now suspended from the Ministry of the Church of *England*, and from Communion at the Lord's Table; as I have been informed.

And

And if it be not so, Why don't the Clergy of the Church of *England* open their Pulpits to him? Why did he not attend the *Great Festival* on the 25th of *December* last? Why did he leave *Boston*, and pass by the Church in *Braintree*, and *Scituate*, to keep Christmas with the Rev. Mr. *Leonard*, a dissenting Minister, and Pastor of the first Church in that Town, and the first Christian Church that was planted in *New-England*? Would he have done thus had he stood right in the Church of *England*? Or is he lately become a Dissenter? I can't understand that he owneth himself to be such an one; but to be a true Son of the Church of *England*; and I wish he had Grace and Honesty enough to prove himself faithful to the Church of which he professeth himself to be a Son.

Now if he hath forfeited the Authority which he received from the Bishop that ordained him, he can't stand right in the Ministry by Virtue of that Ordination, in these Churches.

And what Business have we with him? What Authority have we to invite him into our Pulpits, and to administer the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, unless he be in a proper Way restored to the Ministry again?

But suppose he stands right in the Ministry of the Church of *England*, and is under no Suspension; but only leaves his Charge to ramble about the World: Is it decent and orderly for these Churches to encourage him in such a Disorder? Can any Instance of the like Nature be given? What can his Design be? Have we any Reason to think that he aims at the Good of these Churches, which have dissented from the Mode of Worship

ship in the Church of *England*, which he hath bound himself with an Oath to observe? Doth he not design hereby to weaken these Churches, and to fill up the Church of *England* with Numbers that are grieved with our Ministers for indulging him in his Irregularities?

But I pass to my second Reason.

II. *Because the Way and Manner of his Itinerancy doth not appear to me to be according to Scripture; but rather a Blemish, Reproach, and Scandal to the Ministry.*

For,

1. It doth not appear to me, that he hath any Authority from Christ, either *mediately*, or *immediately*.

If he pretends to have Authority from Christ *mediately*; let him tell by whom; whether by any Bishop of the Church of *England*; or by any Presbytery, among the Dissenters in *England*, *Scotland*, or any where else.

If he pretends to an *immediate and extraordinary Mission*; let him prove it as others have done, who were immediately called and sent by Christ to preach the Gospel, and not think to impose upon us as the Quakers, and other Enthusiasts would do.

2. He spends his Time in such Places where the People don't want him, (unless it be to satisfy, as I fear, their vain Curiosity) they having set over them in the Lord, Pastors of their own chusing, whom they should esteem very highly in Love for their Works sake, 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. They being as well qualified for the Work of the

the Ministry, and many of them, in my Opinion, much more so.

If I am not mistaken, one great End of Itinerant Preachers should be to carry the glorious Gospel of Christ, to those Places where the People are perishing for lack of Vision ; and to endeavour to plant Christian Churches where there are none. Now there are some such Places in *New-England*, and many in *America*.----- But I never could understand Mr. *Whitefield* had any Disposition to spend his Strength among them ; but where he is least wanted, there he most appears ; and this I esteem a great Defect, and an ill Sign upon him, since he hath devoted himself to an itinerant Way of Preaching.

Indeed I have observed, that all the itinerant Preachers that have rambled about the Country of late Years, have taken but very little Notice of the Towns which have been, and are, without learned and orthodox Ministers ; and visited those Places where, by the Assistance of some Ministers who have favoured their wild Conduct, they could in a few Hours call an Assembly to hear *their Words*. In such Places *they* have found the best Picking. ----But may it not be said of them, as in Rom. 16. 18. *They serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Belly ; and by good Words and fair Speeches deceive the Hearts of the Simple.*

III. *Because he hath made it manifest to every observing Eye, that he is no real Friend to the Ministers and Churches of Christ in this Land.*

This

This he hath done several Ways : I shall instance in a few ; as

1. By representing the Pastors of these Churches to be Men of no Grace, without the Knowledge of Christ, and so unqualified for the Ministry. This he hath done in his Journal, where he saith, *I am verily perswaded, that the Generality of Preachers talk of an unknown, unfelt Christ ; and the Reason why Congregations have been so dead, is because they have had dead Men preaching to them.* And more abundantly in saying of Mr. Tennent's Nottingham Sermon, that it is *unanswerable* : In which Sermon Mr. Tennent outstrippeth *Rabshakeh* in Railery against the Clergy of this Generation.

2. By preaching in one Place and another, at the Invitation of some Male-contented and factious Persons, without the Consent, yea contrary to the Mind of their pious and orthodox Pastors, who have received from Christ the pastoral Care and Charge of them, and naturally careth for their State ; and whose Conscience will not allow them to open their Pulpits to him, they observing many Marks of an Impostor upon him ; and therefore esteem it their Duty to warn their People to beware of him as such an one.

3. By silently encouraging Disorders in the publick Worship of God, such as screaming, &c. in some Places in the Country ; and publicly condemning them in *Boston* ; as I have been credibly informed. Doth this show the Man to be a Friend to Order in these Churches ? Or a Friend to Honesty ?

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4. By

4. By countenancing and encouraging Separations and Separatists from our Churches, as he hath lately done at *Exeter* in the Province of *New-Hampshire*; Notwithstanding what he said to Dr. *Colman*.

Such Things as these plainly shew that he is no real Friend to the Ministers and Churches in this Land.

IV. *Because many learned, wise, prudent, pious and aged Ministers, as well as others, whom we ought to esteem very highly in Love for their Works sake, have disapproved of his Conduct; and condemned some of the Doctrines which he hath delivered, as erroneous and dangerous: As may be seen in their printed Testimonies and Declarations against him; which he takes but little or no Notice of.*

For these Reasons I think my self not obliged to invite him into my Pulpit; and obliged to warn you against encouraging him to come among us, lest you should incur the Displeasure of Christ, who would have his Churches know, that he searches the Reins and Hearts, and will give unto every Man according to his Works, *Rev. 2. 23.*

My Brethren, this Letter I have wrote in Faithfulness to you, in this Day of Darkness and Delusion; and subscribe my self,

Your faithful and affectionate Pastor,

*April 15.
1745.*

N. Eells.



P O S T S C R I P T.

I Have lately seen a Pamphlet put out by a Number of Ministers met at *Taunton*, *March 12. 1744, 5.* wherein they have published three Reasons, “ that the World
“ might know what induced them to countenance and
“ encourage Mr. *Whitefield*, in his Ministrations, parti-
“ cularly by asking him into their Pulpits.

Which Reasons, possibly, some of you may think sufficient to justify their Conduct; and that I might for the same Reasons open my Pulpit to him; therefore I think my self obliged to take some Notice of them.

1. *Their first Reason is this, viz.* “ Because the Doc-
“ trines he preaches are (as they apprehend) agreeable
“ to the Standard of Truth, the holy Scriptures, &c.

To this I reply,

(1.) That tho’ a Man can’t be a good Minister unless he be of good Principles, yet he may have good Principles and not stand right in the Ministry. And he that entreth not into the Ministry at the Door, but climbeth up some other Way, tho’ he be sound in Principles, yet he is such a one as our Saviour hath called him, *viz.* A Thief, and a Robber, *John 10. 1.*

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(2.) The

(2.) The Doctrines which he hath preach'd have not been always agreeable to the Standard of Truth, the holy Scriptures : He hath sometimes stept aside it, and told his Hearers ; *That unconverted Men were half Beasts and half Devils* ; and that *all unconverted Ministers are half Beasts and half Devils, and can no more be the Means of any Man's Conversion, than a dead Man can beget a living Child* ; *That Christ loveth unregenerate Sinners with a Love of Complacency* ; --- *That God loveth Sinners as Sinners.* And many other Things hath he taught for Doctrine, which are not agreeable to the Standard of Truth. Some of which he hath retracted, when he saw he was in Danger of loosing his Reputation on the Account of them.

My Brethren ! Had any of the standing Ministry fed their Flocks with such Food, doubtless they would have complained of them : For it is to be acknowledg'd to the Glory of God, and the Praise of these Churches, that there are many among them that can distinguish between Truth and Error.

2. *Their second Reason is this, viz. " Because of the " remarkable Success that hath attended his Labours.*

To this I reply,

That Success is a great Comfort to a good Minister ; but it is no Evidence that a Man stands right in the Ministry.---Good Ministers have often been unsuccessful. *Who hath believed our Report ?* said the Prophet, *Isai.* 53. 1.

But what hath Mr. *Whitefield's* Success been ? Who can tell that he hath had good Success in a Scripture Sense ?

Sense ? It is to be observed with Lamentation, that the Success of his Ministry, (if it may be called Success) hath been to raise in the Minds of many a Spirit of Censoriousness, and Uncharitableness, against all those Ministers that don't follow him, or open their Pulpits to him. And also a Spirit of Bitterness, Anger, Wrath, Malice, Envy, and Revenge in many ; as is evident to every observing Eye, by the Carriage of his Admirers toward many of their Brethren, with whom, before he came among us, they lived in Love, Peace, and good Agreement ; and also Separations and Divisions in our Churches.---Such Success he hath had to the Grief of many godly Persons.

But who are made more humble, more holy, more peaceable, and more charitable towards their Ministers and Neighbours by his Ministry ? I should be glad to see some Examples of it.

These Rev. Gentlemen say, “ *that God hath blessed his Ministry to some of them* ; I hope they will shew the happy Fruit of it to all Men ; and especially to their Brethren in the Ministry, towards whom their Behaviour hath been alter'd, ever since they embraced itinerant Preachers.

3. *Their third Reason is this, viz.* “ Because of the “ exemplary Piety so conspicuous in him.

To this I reply,

(1.) Exemplary Piety is a necessary Qualification for a Minister ; and a great Ornament to him : But yet, this doth not qualify a Man for the Ministry. A Man may have this, and yet have no Right to preach the Gospel.
And

And till a Man stands right in the Ministry, I think it my Duty to shut my Pulpit against him, and shall do so, tho' I am censured as Mr. *Gilbert Tennent* hath censured the Body of the Clergy of this Generation, in that famous, or rather infamous, *Nottingham* Sermon, wherein he declares them to be unconverted, in very strong and even scurrilous Terms ; as the Rev. Rector and Tutors of *Yale-College* in *New-Haven* have well observed, in their Declaration against the Rev. Mr. *George Whitefield*, his Principles and Designs, in a Letter to him ; which I never expect to see answered by Mr. *Whitefield*, to any good Purpose.

(2.) How can his Conduct agree with exemplary Piety ? Is it exemplary Piety for a Clergyman to break his Ordination Vows ? Is it exemplary Piety for a Man that hath had the pastoral Care of any Church, to turn a vagrant Preacher, and to ramble about the World ? And is it exemplary Piety in Mr. *Whitefield*, to disturb the Peace of the Churches of Christ in one Place and another ? Is it exemplary Piety in him to grieve the Spirit of holy Ministers, and holy Brethren, and to provoke them to pray that God would rebuke him ? Is this exemplary Piety ?

Would those Rev. Gentlemen esteem it exemplary Piety, if any in the Ministry who are called Mr. *Whitefield's* Opposers, should treat them as Mr. *Whitefield* hath treated others. --- Mr. *Whitefield* may be a good Man for what I know of him by any personal Acquaintance ; but if he be a good Man, I think he is a strange Man of a good one ; and hath as many Failings as any good Man I have known for these forty Years.

N. Eells.



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